43

MINUTES

OF THE

FORTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION:

HELD WITH THE

BOGUE CHITTO CHURCH, PIKE CO'Y, MISS.,

OCTOBER 6th, 7th, AND 8th, 1849.

NATCHEZ:

PRINTED AT THE COURIER BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

1849.

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MINUTES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 1849.

The Delegates of the several churches composing the Mississippi Baptist Association, met pursuant to adjournment with the Bogue Chitto Church, Pike county, Miss. The Introductory Sermon was preached by Elder A. McKenzie, from Acts, 15th chapter and 2d verse.

Item 1st. After a short recess, the Association was called to order by Elder Z. Reeves, and Elder F. Clark led in prayer.

2. Appointed Elders A. McKenzie and H. McKnight reading clerks.

3. Called for and read letters from twenty-four churches, enrolled the names of their delegates, and minuted their statistics.

4. The Association was then organized by the election of Elder Z. Reeves Moderator, and Bro. G. P. Claughton Clerk—Bros. I. Cain and W. Gwin tellers.

5. The door was then opened for the reception of churches.

6. Ministering brethren present were invited to seats with us, and to participate with us in our deliberations.

7. Bros. J. B. Quin, J. W. Felder and C. Stewart were appointed a Committee on Preaching.

8. Elder H. McKnight was appointed Assistant Clerk.

9. Received correspondence from sister Associations as follows, and the right hand extended to their messengers, viz:—

Pearl River—Elders J. Crawford and W. Fortinbury, with a letter and package of minutes.

Mississippi River—Elders T. M. Bond and L. E. Wall, with a letter and package of minutes.

Eastern Louisiana—Elders F. Clark and W. B. Allen, with a package of minutes.

10. The Committee on Preaching reported, that Elders W. Fortinbury, F. Clark and J. Crawford preach on Lord's day, in the order of their names.

11. Appointed a Committee of Arrangement and Revision, viz:—Elders A. McKenzie, S. Coker and W. Clark, with the Moderator and Clerk.

12. Appointed a Financial Committee, viz: Bros. C. F. Felder, J. Cain and W. Gwin.

13. Appointed on Correspondence to sister Associations, viz:

Pearl River—Elder W. Clark to write, and Elders A. McKenzie and W. Clark messengers.

Mississippi River—Elder A. McKenzie to write, and Elders A. McKenzie and H. McKnight messengers.

Eastern Louisiana—Bro. J. B. Quin to write, and Elders M. Seal and R. Wilkinson messengers.

Union—Elder H. McKnight to write, and Elders S. Coker and Z. Reeves messengers.

14. Granted Bro. G. Cloy leave of absence.

15. Granted Bro. W. East leave of absence.

16. The stand being occupied since the introductory by Elders H. Simmons and W. Fortinbury, the Association adjourned to 9 o'clock, Monday morning. Prayer by Elder Shirk.

EXERCISES ON THE SABBATH.

Met at an early hour, and Elder W. Fortinbury preached from Luke, 24th chap., 46th and 47th verses; he was followed by Elder F. Clark, from 1st Peter, 2d chap., and part of the 5th verse—"Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." After a few minutes recess, the congregation again seated themselves, and Elder J. Crawford preached from 2d Timothy, 2d chap., 15th verse, and Elder H. McKnight closed with prayer.

MONDAY MORNING, OCT. 8, 1849.

Met pursuant to adjournment; prayer by Elder T. M. Bond.

17. The Roll was called.

18. Read the Rules of Decorum and Powers of the Association.

19. The Committee of Arrangement and Revision made their report, which was adopted.

20. The Committee on Preaching reported as follows, viz: Elders L. E. Wall, W. B. Allen and T. Kingsbury to preach in the order of their names and T. M. Bond to close the services.

21. The circular letter called for, read and adopted.

22. Called for corresponding letters to sister Associations, which were read and adopted.

23. Called for reports. The Committee on Finance made their report as follows:

To the amount in the hand of Treasurer,			$83 08	
Contributions of the churches this year,			100 30	$183 38
Cr.—Paid W. Clark for services in 1847,			$22 00	
Z. Reeves for services in 1847 and '48,			40 00	
A. McKenzie for services in 1848,			8 00	
M. T. Conn,	do.		12 00	
M. Seal,	do.		10 00	
W. Clark,	do.		12 00	
Z. Reeves,	do.	1849,	12 00	
S. Coker,	do.	1849,	10 00	
For printing these Minutes,			40 00	
For superintending the same,			15 00	$181 00
Balance in hand of Treasurer,				$2 38

24. Query from New Providence church taken up, which is as follows: "Is a church entitled to an additional delegate by the Constitution of the Association when its number exceeds one hundred, but is less than one hundred and fifty?" *Answer*—A church is not entitled to an additional delegate until her number reaches one hundred and fifty.

25. Bro. T. R. Cheatham, Treasurer of this Association, tendered his resignation, which was accepted. Whereupon, by his consent, he was unanimously re-appointed.

26. Petitions taken up; and agreed to hold the next meeting of this body with the Zion Hill Church, at the usual time.

27. Appointed Elder H. McKnight to preach the Introductory Sermon, and Elder A. McKenzie his alternate.

28. Appointed the Clerk to superintend the printing and distributing of eleven hundred copies of the Minutes of this meeting of the Association, and that he receive fifteen dollars for his services and call upon the Treasurer for funds to defray the expense thereof.

29. *Resolved*, That each church in this Association be requested to send up with their delegates to our next meeting, an abstract containing a condensed account of the time of constitution and subsequent history of the church, and that from said statistics abstracts be published by this Association in place of a circular.

30. *Resolved*, That we recommend to the several churches composing this Association, to appoint and maintain a monthly prayer meeting in

each church during the ensuing year; supplicating God for his blessing upon the churches, and for the prosperity of his cause in our bounds.

31. In view of the general good health which has prevailed throughout our bounds, and the uninterrupted peace and prosperity, both temporal and religious—that while the scourge has been sweeping through our happy land, hurrying thousands of our fellow beings into vast eternity, we have been exempt from the judgment of God: Therefore—

Resolved, That we with gratitude to God acknowledge the expression of his distinguishing mercy; that we are called upon by this circumstance to double our diligence in the work of the Lord, in disseminating the glorious doctrines of the Gospel of our blessed Redeemer, and in promoting the peace and harmony of all the churches.

32. In view of the commotions now agitating the nations of the earth—the result of which is the opening of the foreign ports to the messengers of the Gospel of Salvation; that now the Missionaries of the Cross have entered many of the heathen cities with the Word of God and messages of love to our fellow dying men—as well as the downfall of Popery which indicates to us the near approach of Messiah's universal reign: Therefore—

Resolved, That we earnestly recommend to our churches and all christians this indication of Divine Providence, as a suitable time for them to unite in their prayers and contributions for the foreign missionary operations, to aid in the great work of giving the Gospel to the heathen, and for all other efforts for its spread at home as well as abroad.

33. *Resolved*, That this Association tender its unanimous thanks to the brethren, sisters, citizens, and brethren of other denominations, for the remarkable kind and hospitable manner with which they have entertained us and the congregation during our stay among them.

34. *Resolved*, That the Association adjourn to meet with the Zion Hill Church, in Amite county, Miss., on Saturday before the first Sabbath in October, 1850, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

Minutes read and corrected; after which the Moderator addressed the Association very feelingly in a few appropriate remarks; the Association then sung a parting hymn and gave the right hand; after which Bro. Crawford prayed and we were dismissed.

ZACHARIAH REEVES, Moderator.

G. P. CLAUGHTON, Clerk.

MINISTERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

SHADRACK COKER,	J. D. McFARLAND,
ZACHARIAH REEVES,	MOSES SEAL,
WILSON CLARK,	ROLAND WILKINSON,
ALEXANDER McKENZIE,	WILLIAM THOMPSON,
EZRA COURTNEY,	T. KINGSBURY,
HAMILTON McKNIGHT,	A. CLOY, LICENTIATE.

Statistical Table of the Churches.

Churches.	Delegates.	Baptised	Rec'd by Let'r	Excluded	Restored	Dead	Dismissed	Whites	Colored	Total No.	Ministers	Copies of Minutes.	Contributi'ns	Post Offices.	Sunday Meetings.
[illegible]Providence	R. J. Causey,	24	5		1		12	74	36	110		60	$5 00	Liberty.	4
	J. M. Thompson,														
[illegible]meser	W. L. Johns,	1			1	1	1	56	23	79		60	6 00	Tolers.	3
[illegible] Fork	E. Rentz,	19	1	1			2	70	16	86		60	5 00	Liberty.	2
	J. W. Felder,														
[illegible] Hill	C. F. Felder,	1	6				1	36	12	48	1	50	4 00	Liberty.	3
	I. Cain,														
[illegible]loh	A. Butler, Sr.,	4				1		8	56	64		24	3 00	Centreville.	3
	Wm. F. Dyson,														
Galilee	A. McKenzie,	32	6	2	3	1	1	109	23	132	1	80	10 00	Centreville.	2
	G. P. Claughton,														
[illegible]ewell	L. Wharton,	3	1	3	1		1	29	7	36		30	4 00	Meadville.	1
	J. Scott,					1		26	1	27		40	4 00	Smithdale.	1
[illegible]rshill	W. Marselus,														
	W. F. Cain,	3		1				25	11	36		25	3 00	Holmesville.	
[illegible]lem	P. Bond,														
Friendship	J. Hart,			1		2	1			13		20	3 25	Holmesville.	3
Pike co'y	A. Moak,														
	S. Coward,		3	1		2	3			13	1	16	3 70	Smithdale.	1
[illegible]mah	W. Clark,					2				94				Jackson, La.	
Jackson	A Letter, but no Delegates.	2						38	5	43	1	40	5 00	Holmesville.	4
Mt. Pleasant	Z. Reeves,		3	1			1								
	W. A. Price,									125	1	60	6 00	Liberty.	1 & 3
	H. McKnight,	6					2								
Liberty	K. R. Webb,														
	Geo. Cloy,			6		1	1	23	5	28	1	30	3 25	Meadville.	2
Mt. Zion															
[illegible]anklin co.															
[illegible]dship	Wm. East,	5						37		37	1	25	3 00	Friendship.	2 & 4
[illegible]anklin co.															
	J. Sojourner,							22	2	24		20	3 00	Palestine, Adams co'y.	
[illegible]g Hill	A. Richmond,														
Mt. Zion	H. A. Davis,	3	1			1	2			31		25	4 00	Brookhaven.	4
Copiah co.	J. Sanderfer,														
	J. Thomas,	5	2	2			2	60	18	78		40	6 00	Holmesville.	1
[illegible]ne Chitto	J. B. Quin,														
	S. Coker,		1	1			1	36		36	1	30	5 00	Brookhaven.	3
Mt. Moriah	Wm. Gwin,														
	C. Stewart,	1						19		19		20	4 00	Meadville.	4
[illegible]mpta	E. McCay,														
[illegible] Salem	A Letter, but no Delegates.	5				3		18	44	62	1	50		Williamsport, La.	1
	T. Kingsberry,	15	5	5		3	7	36	20	56	1	50	7 10	Woodville.	2 & 4
[illegible]ce's Creek	J. S. Smith,														
	M. Seal,			3	1	1		15	5	20	1	25	3 00	Liberty.	1
[illegible] Olive	P. Whittington,														
		129	34	27	7	19	38	737	284	1297	11	880	$100 30		

CIRCULAR LETTER,

To the Churches composing the Mississippi Association.

We call your attention in this Circular to the subject of the *co-operation of the Churches with the Ministry in the work of the Gospel.* Under the harmonious arrangement of the Gospel, the churches and ministry, each, have their appropriate sphere of action; yet each must necessarily assist the other. By the churches co-operating with the ministry in the work of the Gospel, we mean therefore, the rendering or affording such assistance by the churches, compatible with the requirements of the Scriptures, as will enable the ministry to perform advantageously, the duties which are required of them by the Word of God. In presenting this subject, we will consider—

1. The necessity of the churches co-operating with the ministry;
2. Point out some particulars in which the churches may co-operate with the ministry;
3. The advantages which result from such co-operation.

First.—The necessity of the churches co-operating with the ministry in the work of the Gospel, arises out of the nature, extent and importance of the ministerial work. The work of the Gospel, or in other words the preaching of "the cross," is the appointed means for the conversion of sinners, and for the edifying of the church of God. This preaching of the cross is the appropriate work of the ministry. It is their province to proclaim the truths embodied in God's Revelation to man, both to the church and to the world; to the church that it may be built up in the faith of God's elect—to the world, that such as believe may be saved. The injunctions to "feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood," and "to preach the gospel to every creature," uttered by the Lawgiver in Zion, express the duty of the christian ministry and unfold the nature of their work. How vast and important that work; a work which effects man not only in this life, but tells upon his eternal destiny. Having "Jesus and him crucified" as their theme, the salvation of sinners for their object, the world is the broad theatre of ministerial action. In this vast field it is their duty to labor to win souls to Christ; as humble instruments to extend the victories of the cross, until the predictions of the prophets relative to the Messiah's kingdom shall be accomplished. How can the ministry perform these great duties, and fulfil their fearful responsibilities without the aid of the churches? How could they preach the Gospel to much purpose, were they wholly dependent upon their own labors for their support and that of their dependents? How could the missionary preach the Gospel to the benighted heathen—to plant the Rose of Sharon upon distant shores—were the churches to withhold their helping hands? We believe we do not say too much when we assert that without the co-operation of the churches, the ministry could do but little towards fulfilling the great work assigned them. It is true that a self-denying, self-sacrificing ministry, under the blessing of God, may accomplish some good, without the aid of the churches, but how much more could they accomplish were they properly sustained. The church is the representative of God upon earth, the ground and pillar of the truth—the ministry are but the officers of the

church. As a general without an army could accomplish but little, though ever so well versed in his profession, so the ministry without the aid of the hosts of God's elect would be greatly inefficient.

How apparent then, is the necessity of the co-operation of the churches with the ministry, to the success of the latter, as instruments in the work of the Gospel. In fact that instrumentality which the Gospel recognizes, so far as the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom is concerned, is based upon the principle of mutual co-operation and reciprocal influence among the followers of Jesus.

Second.—There are various ways by which the churches may assist the ministry. We shall not attempt to enumerate all of these ways, but shall specify only a few particular:

1. The churches may co-operate with the ministry by their *sympathies*. There are discouragements and trials peculiar to the ministry. These sometimes afflict the man of God grievously. Often does he find that his best efforts to promote the welfare of others are unavailing, his prayers and tears for the unconverted disregarded, his rebukes and entreaties unheeded. His lot it is, like all the godly, to suffer persecutions, and to share those fiery trials which sometimes try the people of God. He has to descend into the valley of Humiliation, as well as to ascend the delectable Hill. In the midst of his discouragements, trials and troubles, how encouraging is the sympathy of faithful brethren, and how consoling the voice of their comforting. He feels cheered at the reflection, that others are interested in his work, and feel for his ill-success and weep for his sorrows. Paul, on his journey to Rome, when surrounded by difficulties, a prisoner for the offence of preaching Christ, was encouraged by the sympathy of the brethren who visited him. In like manner the faithful minister of the new covenant, when he feels that he has the sympathies of his brethren is encouraged to continue his "labors of love."

2. They may also co-operate with the ministry by their *prayers*. Of the efficacy of prayer it is needless to speak. An elegant writer has remarked, that "appeals, entreaties and petitions between man and man, move the affairs of this world; but in the church they move Heaven." It is one of the means of building up the Redeemer's kingdom, and of securing blessings to the church. Paul often in his epistles requested the churches to pray for him, that utterance might be given unto him—that he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel. If Paul who had beheld the raptures of Paradise, and been taught by wonderful revelations, needed the prayers of the churches to enable him to fulfil his ministry, how much more do the ministers of the present day. When we consider that efficacy can only be given to the preached word by the Holy Ghost, and that God has promised to hear His people when they cry unto Him, how important it is to the success of the ministry, in the preaching of the Gospel, that the churches should earnestly pray that the influence of the blessed spirit should accompany the word spoken by them. And when we reflect that much of the influence which the ministry exert is attributable to the purity of their lives, how necessary it is to their usefulness that the churches should supplicate a Throne of Grace, that the ministry may be "holy and unblameable." Other influences may be estimated, but that which is exerted by prayer is incalculable. Prayer is heard and answered by that Being who con-

trolest all events. The unceasing, earnest prayers of the churches addressed to Him, who has given us his Son, and who with His son, will also freely give His people all things in behalf of the ministry, cannot but be the means of enabling that ministry to perform their fearful obligations to the glory of God.

3. The churches may also assist the ministry in their work, by the *enforcement of discipline*. This duty particularly belongs to the churches. It is the duty of the ministry to give to the churches instruction relative to the principles of discipline as part of the work of the Gospel; it is the duty of the churches to *enforce* discipline. Some churches underrate this matter, and consider the exercise of church discipline of but little moment. In this they are materially wrong. Nothing instituted by the Saviour, pertaining to his kingdom, can be unimportant. If discipline was not necessary and useful, it would not have been required. The object of discipline is to promote the peace, purity, order, and good government of the churches, and the growth of the members in piety. Where a wholesome discipline is not maintained there is a laxness of christian morality and practice truly lamentable. "Formality takes the place of piety, profession that of principle." But where the contrary is the case, we are struck with the wisdom of the discipline established in the kingdom of Christ, in its adaptation to promote the highest spiritual interest of man. Let church discipline be enforced, personal piety will be brought to the highest state of cultivation; zeal will animate the body of Christ, and the union of christians will afford a strong evidence of the truth of christianity. And as one objec: of the ministry is to promote the growth of grace in the hearts of the professors of the religion of Jesus, a wholesome discipline enforced by the churches will aid in the accomplishment of this object.

4. They may co-operate with the ministry by affording them a *liberal support*. That the ministry should receive a liberal support is now almost universally admitted. That they should receive such support is but the dictate of justice. God has clearly made known his will upon the subject: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar; even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the gospel"—2d Cor., 9th chap. 13th and 14th verses. Their support should be sufficient, according to the size of their families, and the place in which they are called to labor. How humiliating it is to see ministers preaching to wealthy churches, and yet so illy supported as to be frequently without the necessaries and comforts of life. If the ministry were to receive a liberal support they would be enabled to devote their whole time to the work of the Gospel; the consequences of which would be, that they would be more useful, instructive and instrumental in feeding the flock, and in building up the cause of Christ. The ministry feel a delicacy in speaking upon this subject. Possessing sensitive minds, they shrink from presenting a picture of their wants before the churches, and rather than do so, many suffer great privations. It should be the duty of every church to see without solicitation, that its minisetr or pastor is well and sufficiently provided for, so far as is reasonable.

5. And lastly, the churches may aid the ministry in their work, by *living lives of godliness*. This is the most important of all the ways

of co-operating with the ministry. The conversation and conduct of every christian should commend the religion of Jesus to others. In their lives they should be "doers of the word," and not mere talkatives. How feeble would fall the most eloquent arguments relative to the adaptation of the Gospel to convert and sanctify sinners, from the mouths of ministers, were the members of the churches to live ungodly. Would not the practice of christians be arrayed against such arguments with powerful force?—and would not infidelity take occasion thereby to strike with fearful force against the cause of Jesus? But when the professors of christianity are "living epistles, known and read of all men," of the power of the Gospel to change and purify the heart, and when they exhibit in their deportment and actions traits of the lovely amiability of the Saviour, how powerful become such arguments? That the practice of godliness is calculated to exert a happy influence upon others is a fact beyond dispute. Divine wisdom has expressed the sentiment in the requisition, "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven."

Third.—The *advantages* which result from such co-operation are manifold. Some of which we have already incidentally alluded to.

1. *It inspires the ministry with zeal in the performance and prosecution of their duties.* Zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ, are essential to ministerial success. An unfaithful minister, one whose heart is not in his work, is seldom the instrument of good to the churches. These traits have ever been characteristic of the most efficient heralds of the cross. Zeal in the ministry is desirable. The vastness of the field they are called to occupy, the obstacles and difficulties which impede their work, all call for the exercise of zeal and devotion. The emissaries of satan are full of energy and activity in the cause of evil, which should be met by corresponding, if not superior energy and activity on the part of the servants of Jesus, in the cause of light. Nothing under God can serve to promote this, more than the efficient co-operation of the churches. Feeling that they have this co-operation, they go forward in the discharge of duty, with a zeal that never tires and a devotion that never falters, and while thus engaged as humble instruments in the propagation of Truth, their usefulness is enhanced, by the blessing of God, to a degree which baffles calculation.

2. *It promotes the interest of the churches.* The ministry thereby are enabled to devote more time to the ministry of the Word, and consequently can accomplish a greater amount of labor. And in proportion to the amount of labor bestowed will the churches and the cause of Christ be benefited. The churches also, besides this, will enjoy an additional benefit, which is found in the satisfaction and happiness which are the invariable consequents upon the performance of labor in the service of the Lord.

3. Such co-operation will exert a happy influence in favor of Religion upon the world. Sceptics urge as an argument against the truth of christianity, the indifference which characterizes its professors. Say they—if christianity be true, why are its professors so negligent of its requirements, and so indifferent to its propagation. The heathen, they continue, are more liberal, united, and zealous in support of their systems, than the devotees of the religion which is claimed to be from Heaven. By the churches thus co-operating with the ministry, this sceptical senti-

ment will be removed. The world beholding the people of God, the church of the First Born upon earth, animated with zeal in the cause of God, upholding and sustaining the ministry and fellow-laborers with them in every good work for the salvation of the ungodly, will be led to believe that the religion of Jesus, has God for its author and salvation for its end.

4. And, lastly, such co-operation will *secure the blessing of God upon the churches.* No labor or sacrifice in His cause, ever passes unrewarded. And will not He reward with his blessing the churches of his saints—churches which labor diligently and devotedly in His service. Such service will always be rewarded. Not that we would be understood to mean that such labor is meritorious, or entitles the churches to the blessing of God—we simply mean that labor in the service of God, constitutes a part of the system of means in the redemption of man which God will bless. How great the benefit, *the blessing of God.* What a motive does this present for toil, for suffering, for sacrifice, for devotion to His cause. If the churches secure God's approval, what need they more. Where His blessing rests there abides a cloud full of mercies, and there is seen the *glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God.* Then will the churches, his sanctuaries on earth, prosper, and be the gate of righteousness into which the righteous shall enter. They shall become glorious on account of His presence, and vocal with the songs of the redeemed.

In view of what has been said, you will perceive, dear brethren, that a fearful obligation rests upon the churches. This obligation cannot be removed, nor should it be avoided. Let the churches be faithful in the discharge of that obligation. We beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain. By your love for the Redeemer, by the desire you feel for the salvation of sinners—above all, from the consideration of the Redeemer's glory, afford the ministry that aid in the work which will enable them to discharge their duties to the glory of God. By so doing you will be humble instruments in hastening on the blessed period when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, and when the Messiah's peaceful sceptre shall rule all nations. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you:* AMEN.